

Nadler Speaks Out Against Afghanistan War on House Floor

Wednesday, 10 March 2010

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) declared his ongoing opposition to the U.S. military operation in Afghanistan and announced he will vote in support of H.Con.Res.248. Nadler drew a distinction between efforts to fight terrorism globally and the current operations underway in Afghanistan.

"It is simply not justifiable to sacrifice more lives and more money on this war," said Nadler. "Today, our presence in Afghanistan has become counterproductive, fueling the rising insurgency and emboldening those who oppose foreign intervention or occupation of any kind. We are bogged down amidst a longstanding civil war between feuding Afghans of differing tribes, classes and regions, whose goals have little to do with our own." Nadler continues to advocate for efforts to disrupt, dismantle, and destroy terrorist networks, but he argued that using our armed forces to attack terrorist targets wherever they may be is "quite distinct from using the military to secure a nation so that it can be rebuilt."

Nadler continued, "Rebuilding Afghanistan is beyond both our capability, and our mandate to prevent terrorists from attacking the United States. I believe that a short and definitive timetable for withdrawing our troops is the only way to minimize further loss of life and to refocus our efforts more directly at the terrorists themselves."

Nadler issued the following statement on the House floor:

"Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this resolution.

"I am not convinced that the United States and its allies can end the 35-year civil war in Afghanistan -- nor is that our responsibility. We should not use our troops to prop up a corrupt government. It is simply not justifiable to sacrifice more lives and more money on this war. We must rethink our policy. If we do not, we are doomed to failure and to further loss of American lives.

"In late 2001, we undertook a justified military action in Afghanistan in response to the attacks of 9/11, and, with moral clarity and singular focus, we destroyed the al-Qaeda camps, drove the Taliban from power, and pursued the perpetrators of mass-terrorism. I supported that action. Today, however, our presence in Afghanistan has become counterproductive. We are bogged down amidst a longstanding civil war between feuding Afghans of differing tribes, classes and regions, whose goals have little to do with our own.

"Moreover, our very presence in Afghanistan has fueled the rising insurgency and emboldened those who oppose foreign intervention or occupation of any kind. In seeking security and stability in Afghanistan, we have supported corrupt leaders with interests out of sync with the interests of ordinary Afghans. By backing the Afghan government, we have further distanced ourselves from the Afghan people and empowered the insurgency.

"If our mission in Afghanistan is indeed to prevent the safe harbor of terrorists within a weak or hospitable nation, that mission is largely accomplished, since we are told there are now fewer than 100 al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. In reality, terrorist plots can be hatched anywhere, in any nation, including our own. In fact, much of the planning for the 9/11 attacks took place in Western Europe.

"This does not mean that we should stop pursuing terrorists. On the contrary, we must continue the multi-pronged effort to disrupt, dismantle and destroy their ability to harm the United States. We must continue to track and block terrorist financing across the globe, increase intelligence activities focused on terrorists, increase diplomacy to rally our

allies to our cause against terrorism, and, if necessary, use our armed forces to attack terrorist targets wherever they may be -- a function quite distinct from using the military to secure a nation so that it can be rebuilt. Rebuilding Afghanistan is beyond both our capability, and our mandate to prevent terrorists from attacking the United States.

"I believe that a short and definitive timetable for withdrawing our troops is the only way to minimize further loss of life and to refocus our efforts more directly at the terrorists themselves.

I have some reservations that the resolution before us seems to leave no room for a military role in Afghanistan under any circumstances.

"I believe we must reserve the right to use our armed forces to attack terrorist targets wherever they may be, and that would include terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, if they were re-established there. But those camps are not there now, and our troops should not be there either.

"Mr. Kucinich's resolution points us in the right direction - a direction far better than the direction in which we are now headed. Accordingly, I urge approval of the Kucinich resolution.

"Thank you."